

# WASHINGTON PLANS BRILLIANT DANCES AS BUSY SEASON OPENS

## Society of Capital Now Ready to Settle Down to Serious Business of Winter, With Its Many Balls, Debuts, Dinners and Drives.

Special Dispatch to THE NEW YORK HERALD.  
New York Herald Bureau.  
Washington, D. C., Nov. 18.

NOW that the election is over, and the casualties all counted, society is ready to settle down to the serious business of the winter—its dances and its debuts, its dinners and its drives. This week it is more or less in a state of transition. Official Washington, which has largely been busy with the campaign, is getting back into town, preparatory to getting back into harness. To some extent it came back last week, long enough to deposit its luggage, open its house and instruct the servants in the matter of putting it into commission, and then betook itself elsewhere for rest and recreation, a few days of relaxation before settling down to the winter grind, since the President had called upon Congress to reassemble in special session next Monday.

The Vice-President and Mrs. Coolidge, who left Washington last July, apparently expecting to get back "in a few weeks at the outside," and haven't been near the capital since, are really due to arrive here in Northampton, and for the last few days in Boston, since the election. But they have renewed the lease on their apartment at the Willard and will be back again in their own quarters for the coming winter. Their two boys have been back at school in Mercersburg for nearly two months.

The Secretary of State and Mrs. Hughes are back in their Eighteenth street home. Secretary Hughes returned to Washington just before election day—having flung himself into the campaign at the last moment—and Mrs. Hughes joined him within a day or two. She had taken advantage of his being occupied elsewhere to run up to Canada to see how her youngest daughter, Miss Elizabeth, was faring, and she came back cheered and heartened by her continued improvement.

Mrs. Harding seems from all accounts to be progressing steadily. But she

isn't as yet up to attending concerts. And that's a real deprivation to her. She and the President are not greatly given to theatergoing, but Mrs. Harding rarely missed one of the worthwhile concerts last season unless she was out of town. Her box for the New York Orchestra concert last Tuesday, when Damrosch gave a delightful Wagnerian program, she turned over to Miss Laura Harlan, who entertained a party which included several of the Cabinet women. They do say that Mrs. Harding very much wants to get up to the Capitol next Tuesday to hear the President address Congress, called into special session. And they do say that Dr. Sawyer is likely to put his foot down hard on any such scheme. But they also say that Mrs. Harding is being "just as good as gold," biddable and obedient to a degree, in the hope of softening her stern doctor's heart. By this time, next week, you will know whether she succeeds or not. Of course she ought not to, but still—

There is one advantage to the lady of the White House in being known to be sick. She can satisfy all demands that people planning benefits can well make upon her by graciously consenting to head their list of patronesses, and occasionally, when the affair is the sort that requires them, either as decoration or for sale, sending some White House flowers. "Flowers from the White House conservatories!" You don't know the magic in those words. Of course they cannot be bought except at some benefit sale in which the White House is interested, so they sell promptly and at high prices when they are offered at such sales.

So Mrs. Harding is doing her whole duty and winning the undying gratitude of the managers of benefits, sales, bridges, theatricals or balls, by "lending her name." She doesn't have to go and nobody expects the President to go without her. So, you see, well authenticated illness is not without its mitigations.

Looking back over last winter one does not recall that the Hardings were at all addicted to charity balls. I do not at the moment recall one at which the President and Mrs. Harding appeared. They have been at their usual half hour in "the White House box." There always is a White House box, you know, and if the Chief Executive and First Lady will actually occupy it for a few minutes the managers of the party feel that they have done their whole duty. If the function is not a success it is not their

fault, but under existing circumstances the chaperone of the White House can "lend her name" and her presence is excused.

**Friend of Wounded.**

There is one sort of benefit that Mrs. Harding has always patronized, not merely with her name but with her presence and with her purse, and that is the benefit for the men of the trenches, the hospital convalescents, the veterans and the war wounded. She has always interested herself and her friends in the sales of the handiwork of the reconstruction hospital patients. She has gone, usually with a motor—a White House motor—full of friends, and been genuinely interested in the really artistic things that "the boys" had made. She has bought liberally, and both by example and precept induced her friends to buy liberally.

This week the George Baldwin McCoy Unit of the Woman's Legion has been having a sale—and they have probably missed her—though undoubtedly she has sent others to buy for her. That particular unit takes its name from the eldest son of Justice and Mrs. McCoy—the former is Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia—who died in France, a boy whom all Washington knew and liked, and for whose parents there was, and is, the liveliest sympathy. Mrs. McCoy devotes much of her time to helping those who came back and enlisting in the work her wide circle of influential friends. So far as illness occasional sales of the work of the war wounded goes they ought to succeed on their merits. The articles offered are usually worth considerably more than the price asked. It is wonderful what really delicate, artistic work "the boys," whom one would expect to be clumsy fingered, turn out. They have a permanent exhibit of it over in the Red Cross building which is an artistic revelation.

However, as I was saying, Mrs. Harding is in the main probably counting it as one of the few assets of her illness that she can "set her" with merely lending her name, which looks very well at the head of the list of patronesses, to the various worthy causes

in which she is willing to take an unalloyed interest. Especially is this true of the benefit balls, whose name is legion. They come along in swift succession from mid-November till Lent. Then there are half a dozen "miserables" and several more Easter balls—"for the benefit of"—

This season it is the Washington Opera Ball which leads the list. It is scheduled for next Monday in the newly reopened Willard ballrooms. These were completely wrecked by fire last April and have only been used once or twice since. I went to the Pennsylvania Society's belated armistice celebration in them Wednesday night and found them still rather unfinished, bare and bleak looking. However, that will not trouble the Washington Opera people, for they are quite capable of transforming any four bare walls into fairyland. They have Major George Oakley Totten, Jr., at the head of the committee handling that particular detail, and while Major Totten will probably do most of the work himself—and is quite likely not to sleep at all for forty-eight hours before the thing comes off—it will surely

be something original and perfectly enchanting.

It always is. Major Totten has done that sort of thing before. He's an artist and an architect—a Beaux Arts man, you know—and I used to think he was the most useful bachelor in Washington. Then when we all supposed he was quite immune—nobody's beau, because he was everybody's—he went and got married.

The Washington Opera Ball promises to be an artistic success; that seems assured. And I do hope it is a financial success as well. It's for that Washington Opera Company which the Edouard Alibon have been trying so hard to

establish and leave behind as their legacy to the nation in general and Washington in particular.

It would be such a wonderful thing for the whole country if they could realize their splendid vision, especially for the young singers who don't have much chance under the present system until they have studied abroad and lost their youth and their enthusiasm in the striving for the "European reputation" on the very inadequate European salary, which must be a problem to any hope of success, at exorbitant salary, at home. It's exorbitant all around, that way, you know.

For their ball Monday night the Alibons have one or two artists of international reputation who have been interested in their plans and enthused by their enthusiasm, who will furnish musical interludes, well worth the price of the ball tickets—if that were all. But it isn't. The Washington Opera Ball is always a costume ball and of the most original. They are always a feast for the eye—the costumes well conceived and splendidly carried out. This year they have interested their many friends in their idea of having

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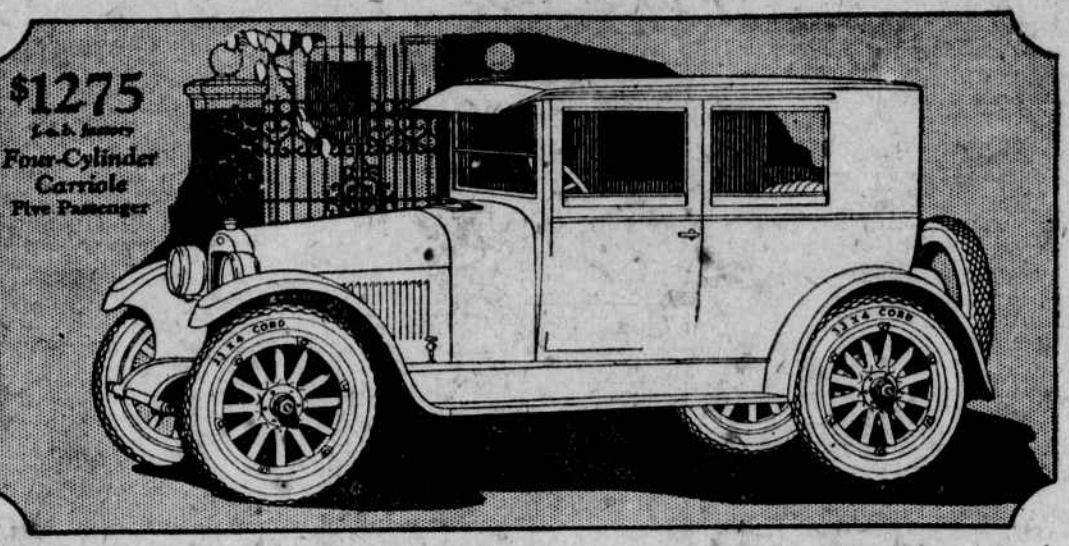
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